

this pile of bricks

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by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

“Did you have lunch already?”

Dream chews on his lower lip, and takes a left turn. “Not yet. I wanted to wait for you.”

“Oh.” George pauses. “You didn’t have to do that.”

“I know.” The car feels even more suffocating than before. Dream is glad he rolled down the windows. “I wanted to.”

Dream moves in with his best friend, and accidentally falls in love.

Notes

happy very late birthday ari :D i hope u like this !!!!

disclaimer: if anyone in this fic expresses any discomfort to being in it, i will gladly delete this and also myself

[>if u would like to listen to the playlist](#)

happy reading!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

August 27

9:43 A.M.

Moving in together, Dream decides, was a terrible idea.

It’s already a mistake waking up, the smell of burning toast drifting in the air for the third morning

in a row. A reasonable person might assume they were having a stroke, and would maybe even hurry out of bed to make sure they weren't dying.

Dream, however, knows better, and spends another three minutes in bed.

He's tempted to spend the entire day under the covers, to a degree. Wasting away a sunny Friday couldn't have too many consequences, and with his bed being the perfect amount of warm, the sun shining golden through his curtains, the thought sounds so appealing.

Nonetheless, Dream would rather not be in bed while his kitchen is being burnt down, and instead goes through the process of dragging himself out of bed. He turns over onto his side, landing on the floor with a dull *thud*, and slithers to the bathroom, in which he lazily freshens up. The entire experience is accompanied with the scent of burning bread. It's an odd ambiance.

Dream walks into the kitchen, and is met with George holding an on-fire pan.

Half of him almost wishes he were having a stroke.

There is a small moment of silence, in which they both hold eye contact, until George resumes his valiant efforts to stop the rising fire. Dream, for once, has no fight in him, and watches warily as George's battle with an on-fire pan goes on.

"What," Dream starts, slowly approaching the burnt frying pan when it doesn't seem to be aflame any longer, "in the world is wrong with you?"

"I wanted breakfast," George defends, and, as if to prove his point, his stomach growls unnaturally loudly, and they both glance at his stomach, before meeting eyes. George smiles sheepishly, and Dream forces his face to stay stony, lest he also begin *smiling* in such a grave situation.

"So you decided to burn down our kitchen," he reasons, grabbing a nearby towel and carefully disposing the pan into the sink. It's not even eleven a.m. yet. Dream doesn't know what went wrong in his life to end up here.

George frowns. "I didn't do it on *purpose*, you know. It was merely a— happy accident, of sorts."

"Happy accident," Dream echoes, and George presses his lips together to force away his grin. He looks like an idiot. He looks wonderful. "You aren't allowed to quote Bob Ross anymore." He walks over to the fridge, sighing. "You also aren't allowed in the kitchen on your own. You're nearly as bad as Sapnap."

George snorts, taking a seat at the kitchen island when it becomes clear that Dream is taking charge of the breakfast business, bringing out an unused bowl and the egg carton. "I'm far better. Have you seen him try to cook?"

"At least he didn't nearly burn down the apartment by making toast," Dream mutters. He brings out a spatula, careful when he turns on the stove under another, unburnt pan. He doesn't know how George managed to screw up toast so badly.

"Yeah," George agrees, "he didn't need fire to nearly burn down his apartment."

Dream is vaguely reminded of the night of 2020, and wisely keeps his mouth shut. George takes this as a victory, when his face splits into a knowing smile. Dream isn't as annoyed as he would like to be.

"We need to get a toaster," Dream mentions instead. "Also a vacuum." He can still feel the crumbs

from a week ago in their rug. He shivers at the memory.

George gives him a look, but doesn't mention the change of subject. "Toothpaste, too." He, then, slides off his seat to wander to the fridge. Dream lowers the heat on the stove, and watches George take out a carton of apple juice.

He places the apple juice on the counter, and makes his way to the cupboard for a glass, briefly brushing against Dream, who holds back a flush and presses himself closer to the counter to make room, swallowing with their momentary close proximity.

George pauses as he returns back to his seat, two glasses in hand and unbothered. "I need a new charger, too."

Dream clears his throat and turns back to the stove. "We'll make a list."

He flips the eggs once more, before turning the stove off. He makes an even cut between the made omelet, and places their servings onto clean plates, bringing out two forks. He is overly careful when he carries them over to where George sits, patiently waiting, and plops into the seat next to him.

It's an oddly sweet gesture when he finds another glass of juice accompanying George's, an absentminded favor. The apple juice is extra sweet when he takes a sip.

Dream pulls out his phone, opening the notes app. "Vacuum, toaster, toothpaste— what else?" He asks, turning to look at George, who has already made a quick job of shoving half the omelet into his mouth. His cheeks pudge out, and his eyes are a little too wide-open from being awake so early in the morning, but he looks happy. Dream's heart feels a little funny.

In the past two weeks that they have lived together, it has only been in the last few days that they have been having meals together, proper dinners and lunches when it became apparent that George did not have the energy to cook for himself every day, and they could only keep ordering take-out for so long. It was a great financial decision, and the sight of pizza had been starting to make Dream vaguely sick.

Shared meals were a wonderful idea, Dream decides. He likes seeing George so early in the morning, so puffy-eyed and drowsy.

He has never been able to see George like this, never having had sleepovers or anything of the like, and the sudden realization of them being able to simply wake up together, if just in separate rooms, sets him in a little bit of an unknown whirlwind. He doesn't know if it's the simple domesticity of it, or the fact that it's George.

He ignores the implications of the last bit, and neatly cuts into a piece of egg.

"Charger," George says through a full mouth, because he's disgusting like that. "Socks, too. I lost all of mine."

"Swallow, first," Dream replies, scrunching his nose when George makes a point to chew obnoxiously, before they both pause and look at each other. The hidden implication of Dream's response clicks, and George lets out a small giggle. Dream pretends he isn't smiling when he adds, "That's disgusting, George. You're disgusting."

"I didn't even say anything!" George protests, but he keeps laughing, bringing up a hand to cover his full mouth.

"I'm moving out," Dream announces, trying his best to keep a straight face. It doesn't work.

"No, you aren't." George huffs as he swallows a glob of eggs, and takes a sip of apple juice. "You like me too much to move out."

He's still smiling, pretty in the morning light, and Dream blinks once, twice, as his stomach does some sort of gymnastic move. He looks down at his eggs.

Dream clears his throat, and wisely doesn't argue with George's statement.

"We can go to the store on Sunday."

August 31

3:32 P.M.

Dream taps his fingers on the steering wheel to the beat of the music, leaning back into the driver's seat as he waits. The sun is bright in the sky, the angle just right for him to bring down the overhead mirror compartment to block the rays from blinding him. He rolls down the windows, the weather more on the chilly side, but the inside of the car had been turning somewhat suffocating.

The door to the passenger's seat opens.

"Hi."

Dream turns to George, who leans to place his bag, presumably carrying his laptop, into the backseat. There's a moment where he watches George catch his breath, sucking in a deep inhale, before slowly exhaling.

George's cheeks are tinted pink, and he looks frazzled, adjusting his shirt's collar, and he brings down his own mirror to take a look at the state of his hair. George runs a hand through it, and flips the mirror back up, until the sun assaults his eyes, and he brings it back down again.

"Hello," he returns after a second, sending Dream a small smile. There's an entire storm of butterflies swirling in Dream's stomach.

He doesn't know why he feels a little nervous, all of a sudden. "Hi," he repeats dumbly. It makes George laugh, and Dream can feel his own lips quirk upward. "How did the meeting go?"

"It went alright." George buckles in his seat, and lets his shoulders relax. "She was nicer than I thought she would be."

Dream turns the car key, and the engine hums alive. "What do you mean? Did you think she'd be mean or something?"

"I mean, a little. She had a Karen haircut," George elaborates, and Dream huffs a light laugh.

"Also, all her texts sounded incredibly passive aggressive. I think it was all the proper punctuation and stuff, even though I typed like that, too." George shrugs. "But yeah, it went alright."

"That's good," Dream replies, and stops at a red light. "Are you hungry? Did you have anything to eat?"

George shakes his head. "I haven't had anything yet."

“Okay. Cool.” The car continues to move while Dream takes the familiar route home. “I made lunch for us.” He can feel it when George turns to look at him. Dream considers jumping out the car, just so he wouldn’t have to be seen any longer. He doesn’t know why he feels so exposed when it comes to George.

“Did you have lunch already?”

Dream chews on his lower lip, and takes a left turn. “Not yet. I wanted to wait for you.”

“Oh.” George pauses. “You didn’t have to do that.”

“I know.” The car feels even more suffocating than before. Dream is glad he rolled down the windows. “I wanted to.”

The rest of the car ride is silent, and it’s quick when they reach home. They take the stairs when the elevator hasn’t arrived after four minutes of waiting, and Dream offers to carry George’s bag up the stairs, even though George stubbornly refuses.

Dream fishes his keys out of his pocket, and drops them twice when trying to unlock their apartment door.

George gives him an unamused look. “Why are your motor skills so bad,” he says, leaning down to pick them up before Dream, and inserting the key into the keyhole.

“I make lunch for you, and all you do is bully me.” Dream forces on sniffles, pretending to be teary, until he cracks and accidentally chuckles. George throws the keys at him, and they hit him in the chest. “*George!* I could’ve– I could’ve *died!*”

“Good,” George mutters, but it doesn’t hurt as much when he comes over and lightly pats Dream’s chest, just to make sure he hadn’t done any actual damage. “You’ll be fine, you big baby.”

Dream catches George’s wrist before he moves away, warm under his palm, and George raises an eyebrow. “Say sorry, at least,” Dream says, frown wavering as he tries not to smile. He almost has the urge to pull, to bring George closer, have their chest bump and breathe in the same air.

“I’m sorry,” George drawls, and Dream lets go. George takes two steps back, before adding, “Sorry that you’re an *idiot.*”

Dream’s mouth falls open. “*George!*”

George doesn’t make it too far from Dream, who reaches out and grabs George by the elbow, knocking their hips together in the process of getting both his arms around the shorter man. They are closer than they were before, George’s back to Dream’s chest, and they both still have their shoes on, standing in the middle of their living room.

“Let me *go*,” George insists, squirming under Dream’s hold, and, even if Dream would like to consider himself pretty strong, it’s a struggle to keep a grip on him.

“Take it back, and then I’ll let go,” Dream states, tightening his arms around George’s stomach as he brings him even closer. “It’s what you deserve for the abuse I go through.”

George wriggles in his arms, and then deflates with a huff. “I’m never taking it back.”

“Then I’m never letting go,” Dream says simply. He’d be okay with that.

“Who says I want you to let go?”

Dream feels all too hot, suddenly. There’s acid in his veins. “*George.*” He doesn’t know why he keeps saying his name. It’s found a place in his mouth.

“Okay, alright, I take it back!” George finally forces out, practically leaping out of Dream’s arms when they loosen. “You suck. I want food.”

Dream rolls his eyes, and they walk together to the kitchen. “You’re so high maintenance.”

But he doesn’t mind. He doesn’t think he’ll ever mind.

September 1

7:05 P.M.

Despite it being the first day of September, summer stretches on, warm weather and warm skin as they live on. It’s comfortable, not too hot like July or August, but treading on tamer degrees. Dream has never been too big of a fan of the warmer months. He looks forward to winter soon.

“We need a washing machine,” George declares.

They are the only ones in the laundromat, for the fact that most people did not do their laundry at seven p.m. on a Wednesday. They were not most people. If they were most people, they would have known better than to procrastinate on laundry, until they were down to their last clean shirts.

They did not know better. They were down to their last clean shirts.

Dream feels a little ridiculous, wearing a hoodie with his old high school’s logo plastered on the front, just barely too tight on him from his growth spurt right after graduation. Even so, he didn’t have much room to complain, seeing as he had finally whittled down to the last of his clean clothes.

George isn’t off any better, in a bright orange t-shirt with a smiley face on the front, paired with blue bottoms. It isn’t the most flattering of clothing combinations, but George manages to look breathtaking anyway, even amongst the dirty tiles and walls of the laundromat.

“It isn’t so bad,” Dream tries, tossing a bundle of clothes into the machine. They hadn’t cared enough to separate their clothes properly, and now they’ve all been thrown into the same large bag, mixing together their t-shirts and boxers. Neither of them mind.

George raises an eyebrow. “I don’t want to come back here every other week, Dream.”

“It can be bonding time for us.” Dream stands up straight from where he had been bent over, peering into the washing machine, before digging around for a few quarters. “It’s a little calming, you know.” He inserts the quarters, and brightens when the machine begins to pour in water.

“Yeah,” George scoffs, watching Dream hop a seat onto the counter, “the honking cars outside really set the mood.”

Dream smiles. “Come on,” he pats the space next to him, “it’s not so bad.”

“Whatever,” George responds, and shuffles over to sit next to him.

“We can occupy ourselves while we wait,” he suggests. Dream looks around the room, before turning his gaze back to George. He looks golden in this light. The sunlight’s rays seem to hit him rightfully through the dirty windows of the laundromat. Dream purposefully stares at the row of washing machines. “I spy?”

“What are we, five?” George rolls his eyes, but looks around anyway.

Dream raises an eyebrow. “I’ll go first.”

“No, I want to go first,” George replies immediately. “I spy something— ugly and stupid.”

“I don’t see any mirrors, George,” he says very maturely.

George glowers at him. “Where’d you learn that one? Primary school?”

“*Where’d you learn that? Primary school?*” Dream mimics in a high voice, one that isn’t reminiscent of George’s voice at all, but it makes the other man laugh anyway, so it’s a success in his book. “You’re stupid. I spy with my eye something blue.”

“You didn’t even answer my one,” George whines, yet looks around anyway. “Is it the laundry detergent?”

Dream shakes his head, tearing his eyes away when George furrows his eyebrows and begins chewing on his inner cheek, semi-pouting like he does sometimes. “No.”

A few seconds pass while George considers, the smell of cleaning clothes spiraling in the air, and the muffled sounds of tumbling wet clothes as white noise. The laundry mat drowns in golden sunshine, remnants of the dying daylight. Even through George’s complaints, Dream could admit, it’s a little nice, doing laundry together like this.

They sit together on the counter, in the area where sensible people fold their clothes. They sit close enough to touch, close enough to lean on, close enough to link hands. Dream shoves his own hands in his hoodie’s pockets. This was not the time for such scandalous thoughts.

“The hangers,” George mentions suddenly, and Dream nods.

“Yeah. Your turn.”

“I am a genius,” he says without missing a beat. “I spy something red.”

Dream frowns, swerving his head around to catch a full glimpse of the entire room.

He can’t spot much red, but maybe it’d be easier to find it if he didn’t keep looking back to George, who doesn’t seem to notice as he also looks around the room. Dream traces the slopes of George’s face with his eyes, the gentle curve of his nose, the dark brown of his eyes. He spots red tinged on George’s bitten lips.

Dream forces his eyes away, the inner monologue of *what is wrong with you why did you keep staring you weirdo you should not be allowed around people* running through his mind. He, a little bit, wishes they had gotten a washing machine earlier. Maybe then he wouldn’t be staring at his friend like a creep.

There’s a bright red basket a few washing machine rows away when Dream finally looks past George, as well as a door with a red handle. Dream doesn’t know how he missed any of this.

“The door handle,” he says.

George shakes his head. “No. Wrong.”

Dream squints. “The basket.”

“Wrong again,” he sighs, faux disappointment when he looks at Dream. Dream feels the vague urge to cover his face, for some strange reason. He feels all too vulnerable whenever George looks at him. “You’re trash at this game.”

“Shut up,” Dream huffs, craning his neck to look behind him. He rakes his eyes over the tiles and dryers, before he lands on the front door. “It’s the sign,” he suggests, to where the backside of the *Open!* sign hangs from the door, the imprinted, red letters exclaiming *Closed* facing away from the outside view.

The design is in inky scarlet, bold in the sunlight, and George nods. “Wow, Dream, you’re so smart.”

“You’re an idiot,” Dream leans over to nudge his shoulder against George’s. “A colorblind idiot.”

“Why do you hate me,” George responds easily, and nudges right back.

“I don’t,” Dream replies a bit too immediately, and tries his best to fight the urge to jump onto the busy road when silence follows.

Still, the confession is worth it when George turns pink under the golden light.

September 10

3:23 A.M.

Dream’s crisis begins on a Wednesday, because the world has never waited for weekends.

It’s too early to be considered Wednesday, as the clock slowly ticks to three a.m. Even so, Dream’s phone shines a glowing *Wednesday* when he checks the date, and he’s got a class to attend in less than five hours, so it most definitely is a Wednesday. The worst weekday.

It isn’t so bad, however, when he throws a green gummy bear - his favorite, but it’s also George’s favorite, so he makes a sacrifice - to George, who expertly catches it in his mouth from across the couch where he sits. He chews for a second, before nodding in approval. Dream cracks a grin.

The night is casual, with some sort of mystery movie from the nineties playing on the T.V., and the two of them occupying the living room with an entire bucket of popcorn, as well as an array of candies between them.

George lets out a somewhat worn out laugh at a joke that’s really not that funny, watching as the two main characters stumble into each other. Dream’s eyes immediately flick over to him, catching the way George’s cheeks lift up with his small smile, and he has never been an artist, but his fingers itch to draw a replica anyways.

“*That’s him, officer, that’s the perpetrator!*” The woman on the screen cries, pointing a dramatic finger to the man dressed in all black who, in Dream’s humble opinion, is all too obvious for someone committing a bank robbery— the striped shirt is a dead giveaway, along with the hockey mask pulled over his face.

“Perpetrator,” George mumbles, barely heard over the chatter of the movie, “I hardly know her.”

Dream snorts despite himself. “You’ve been hanging out with Karl too much.”

“No need to be jealous,” George says, and Dream finds himself rolling his eyes, a slight smile on his lips. George turns, dark eyes analyzing Dream, who stares back, butterflies having an entire moshpit in his stomach as he does so.

Seconds pass, until Dream asks, “What?”

“Nothing,” George answers easily. His lips tilt upward, like he’d just thought of a joke, and Dream easily returns it, a flurry of warmth riling up his chest when he does so. George turns back to the movie, oblivious as Dream stares, keeps staring, the screen drawing shadows across George’s face, and it should be unflattering, but it’s not, because it’s George.

Dream pauses. What difference does it make if it’s George? It’s just George.

Another laugh track plays, George laughing along with it, and— his eyes scrunch up too, shining in the blue light, and teeth on full display, shaking shoulders, and Dream really wants to kiss him.

He freezes.

Dream really wants to kiss him. To kiss George.

“Are you dying?” George asks, slight concern in his voice when he watches Dream choke on his spit, trying to get his bearings as he coughs violently. He’s sure his face is more than a little pink, perhaps even scarlet at this point. There was a sufficient lack of air getting into his lungs right now.

“I’m fine,” he croaks. George raises his eyebrows, unimpressed, and keeps looking until Dream proves he isn’t on the brink of imminent death. Reluctantly, he returns to the movie.

Dream— doesn’t know where that thought had come from. He’s never wanted to kiss his best friend before, and why would he? It’s just George.

George laughs again, bright and summery in the middle of autumn, and it’s immediate, the way Dream looks over to get a glimpse of his smile, just to see the way his eyes and cheeks scrunch upward, and—

Oh, Dream thinks, and then thinks, *oh*, because it’s never been *just* George.

A weird flower of realization is blossoming behind his forehead, behind his chest, swallowing up his heart and stomach and palms, and suddenly he is feeling very nervous, because—

It’s three a.m. on a Wednesday when Dream realizes that he wants to kiss his best friend.

September 23

12:03 A.M.

After that, it’s as though a sort of catalyst had gone off in Dream’s mind, because now he can’t stop thinking about kissing George.

It’s more than a little strange, sure, but if it had just been the want to *kiss* George, then Dream

would have been fine, would have easily blamed it on being touch starved. Or lonely. Or a depressing combination of both.

Unfortunately, it isn't just the want to kiss George. No, instead, the want to hold George's hands, his arms, press his fingers against his lips and cling onto his back, possibly wrap his arms around his middle and let his back meet Dream's chest, the want to be near George constantly follows him like a cartoon stink cloud.

It's close, it's always near when he thinks of George. It's even worse when George is nearby, a sort of temptation that Dream isn't meant to touch.

He feels guilty, and starved.

Guilt that he feels starved.

It's a little unbearable.

"Am I just your chauffeur," Dream mildly complains, leaning over to shove a few more fries into his mouth. George swats his hand away for stealing his fries.

"Yes," he replies easily, mouth full of burger, grease coating his lips shiny and a sprinkle of salt on his cheek. Dream wants to kiss it away, or something equally gross.

He stills at that last thought, before rushedly waving it away. He resolves to continue eating his incredibly salty fries.

They sit together in the empty parking lot of a shining diner behind them, alone outside the two workers inside. The sky is dark, inky with no stars in sight. For not the first time, Dream wished he lived somewhere just a tad bit more vacant, where the sky would be full of stars, clear enough for him to see Mars. He'd love to stargaze with George.

At the thought, he looks over at George, who leans over to grab his drink. The neon light of the diner glows onto both of them, coloring George pretty, even prettier than usual in the pink hoodie he wears.

Dream pauses, fry in the air. "Is that my hoodie?"

"You just noticed," George replies dryly, removing the straw from his mouth, and he looks down at the hoodie. "It is. I was cold, and we were leaving, and it was just— on the sofa. So I took it."

"Oh," Dream responds, not knowing what else to say. He can't look away. George confesses it so easily, like sharing clothes means nothing to him. Maybe it doesn't. Maybe it's a normal, best-friends thing to do. Maybe Dream is being an idiot. "Okay."

George frowns. "Do you— want it back?"

"No," he says, just a little too quickly, before internally cringing at himself. "No, you can— you can keep it. I don't mind." George looks better in Dream's clothing, anyway. "You look good in pink," Dream adds, honestly.

George clears his throat, and looks away. "Okay."

Dream raises an eyebrow. "Okay?" He likes the growing blush on the other man, imprinting his cheeks slightly pinker. He's all pink, in clothing and in his cheeks. He looks unfairly attractive.

“Okay,” George repeats again, and rolls his eyes at Dream’s amused smile.

They finish up their food when the time slowly clicks to one a.m., the night sky only growing darker. These moments of ridiculousness, Dream realizes, such as eating an incredibly late dinner together in the empty parking lot of a diner, only ever happen with George, if only because George doesn’t have a car nor a license.

It might also include the fact that George has learned, or maybe has known the entire time, of Dream’s innate inability to say no to him, which is a fact he abuses relentlessly– like right now, his bank account just a little emptier and him awake when he is most definitely meant to be asleep.

“You know,” Dream says when they’re cleaning up, “you’re a really bad influence on my diet. I only ever get fast food when it’s with you.”

“I am not the one feeding you fries right now, Dream.” He tries to ignore the sound of his name in George’s mouth, opting to instead throw a stray ketchup packet at the other man.

“You’re an accomplice.”

George makes an affronted noise. “I am *not*. You drove me here out of your own volition.”

“Well, I mean,” Dream begins, and George raises his eyebrows, readying for whatever bullshit excuse he’ll be coming up with. “It’s not like I can say no to you. You’ve got, like, pretty privilege.”

“Pretty privilege,” George echoes, looking a little flustered, and Dream wants to kiss him senseless. Dream wants to kiss him until George is a little breathless, speechless, lips red and swollen, and he wants to tangle their fingers together, go home together and tumble into the covers together, wrap his arms around George and maybe never let go.

He does none of this, and instead nods. “Yeah.”

“You’re ridiculous,” George decides, and shoves the last of his burger into his mouth.

“And yet you’re still here,” Dream grins, dodging as George throws back the same ketchup packet.

“I just said you were my chauffeur.” He says this through a full mouth, and Dream thinks about how, if it were anyone else, he would grimace and tell them to stop speaking with their mouth full. He, however, does not do this, because George is not anyone else. “Did you miss the memo?”

“George,” he sighs dramatically, and maybe it holds more truth than it should when he says, “you wound me.”

Maybe it does ring truer when George simply shrugs, and tears another cut into Dream’s heart.

October 3

9:28 P.M.

Dream was pretty rational at times, except for the times he wasn’t.

Rationally, Dream knows he should allow a more comfortable amount of space between George and him, enough for him to be able to breathe and look somewhere else besides George’s lips or

hands or torso or the small slip between his neck and his shoulder blades, spaces for Dream to place his selfish, wanting hands.

Rationally, Dream should tuck his hands away and stay in his lonely little room, watch some more Game of Thrones until he eventually, inevitably, drifts to sleep. He should tuck himself under the covers of his own room, maybe use this time to study, perhaps eat a snack or prepare for bed.

Dream does none of this, and instead invites himself into George's room.

He flops on the bed, the air being pushed out of him as he shoves his face into the sheets of George's bed. He sits there, unmoving, until he lazily rolls onto his back to peer up at the ceiling, before glancing over at the desk, where George sits in front of his monitor, not even having looked up.

George, undoubtedly, is busy with his work. Dream shouldn't bother him.

"George," Dream says.

George slowly swivels his chair to face him, raising a singular eyebrow. "Dream," he replies.

"Pay attention to me," he orders, ignoring the slightly amused expression George sends him. "We've barely talked all week."

"We had dinner together last night," George points out. "And we hung out in the living room this morning."

Dream blinks. "What does that have to do with anything," he replies, and George breathes a light laugh. "Come here." He pats the space next to him, and half-heartedly reaches out for George, until he lets his arm drop depressingly onto the bed.

George takes a long look at him, glances back at his screen, then the clock, and back at Dream. "Why?"

He shrugs, too truthful when he answers, "I want you." He pats the space next to him again. "Come here."

George raises his eyebrows, cheeks slightly pink as he repeats, "You *want* me?"

Dream ignores the obvious innuendo, and pats the bed once more. "I'm lonely. Come *here*."

George scoffs, and swivels his chair to face the monitor again. Dream can't help the frown on his face, and he doesn't know why he feels so unreasonably hurt at the clear refusal of joining him. Maybe he had taken it too far in the admission that he wants George, but it isn't in the manner that most would think. He wants George, in close proximity, in warmth and touch and the reminder that he exists with Dream. He wants George, just to be close. To hold.

Dream turns over and shoves his face into the pillow again, and hopes that maybe, if he tries enough, the slight hurt and embarrassment he feels would go away. He almost considers leaving the room when there's a dip in the mattress.

He lifts his head from the pillow, and blinks as George climbs onto the bed. The other man makes the effort of properly getting underneath the covers, drawing them up, up to his chest, and lies on his back, staring up at the ceiling.

Dream blinks. "Hi."

George doesn't look at him. "Hello." There is a beat. "Get under the covers. It's weird if one of us is on top of them while the other is under."

Dream doesn't need to be told twice, and slips under the duvet, the layer of cold on his skin dissipating from the newfound warmth under the covers. He brings the blankets over their heads, and now their bodies are entirely under the blanket, and George turns to look at him, just as the duvet lands on their faces.

"What are you doing?" George questions, and Dream shrugs, although it goes unseen.

"I don't know. I just want to be close to you." He shuffles a little closer, and places a careful hand around George's middle, where he can feel the rise and release of his breath. "Do you mind?"

"No," George mumbles, and allows himself to be pressed closer.

Dream has always been faintly greedy when it comes to George, and he, foolishly, lets himself want more, ask for more, take more as he presses his face into the curve of George's neck, nose pressing into his skin. He tightens his hold around George, lets himself have more as he presses himself into George's side.

They've never been like this, with Dream not the touchy-type, and although George has never shied away from touch, he's never been the initiator. This is a long leap, from barely hugging to cuddling in bed together. It would be understandable if George, even if he was seemingly always okay with physical contact, pushed him away.

He waits for George to push him away.

George doesn't.

George, instead, slowly raises his hand, as if to not startle Dream away, and carefully, so carefully, places his hand into Dream's hair. There is a moment where it stays there, frozen, before George reluctantly, yet steadily, rakes his fingers through his hair. And repeats.

Dream lets his eyes fall shut, breathing out a shaky sigh.

Dream doesn't know what it means.

October 9

11:38 A.M.

Although the colder months are quickly approaching, Dream, lately, has only been feeling warm with George around.

His head hurts a little, aching from hours under fluorescent lights, and he's never been more thankful when he finally steps out of the lecture hall, legs shaky from disuse and stomach growling.

The leaves crunch under his shoes, dried up and warm-colored smudges against the gray of the sidewalk as he follows the same route across campus, mindless when he wanders down the same path he always takes. It's nice, not having to think for the first time all day. He'd bet his brain was a puddle in his head.

Dream is halfway home when he bumps into someone.

“What the fuck,” George says, stumbling back, and Dream reaches out, a hand on his forearm to prevent him from straying further.

“Sorry,” he replies almost immediately, before shuffling closer. “Hi. What’re you doing here?”

George shrugs. “I was on my way to your class. I wanted to get lunch together. What are you doing?” It’s only eleven-forty two. Dream’s class lets out at twelve.

“He let us out early,” Dream explains, and they begin walking again.

Dream doesn’t let go of George, hand dropping from his forearm to his hand instead, and George grips his fingers as he guides the both of them to an unknown destination. Dream would ask, but his mind was nothing short of pillow stuffing. He doesn’t really need to ask, anyway. He trusts George. He’d pick a good place to eat.

Neither of them speak much, with Dream too tired to properly offer conversation that would be coherent, and George doesn’t seem to be in the mood to talk, anyhow.

Dream vaguely registers where they’re going, taking turns at George’s direction, carefully avoiding bumping into other people as they walk. The day is nice, chilly in the air but the sunshine is warm on Dream’s skin. He could fall asleep walking, if he tries.

He forces himself to stay awake, however, making sure his eyes stay open. He stares at the ground, the green grass and gray cement, before his eyes trail upward to George, his hair, the back of his neck, the tag of his sweatshirt sticking out and the black sweatpants he’s clad in. He looks like he’s just rolled out of bed. He might have. Dream wants to hug him.

George takes a right turn, and they’re on an unfamiliar street, with buildings Dream has never seen before. George seems to know what he’s doing, though, when he slows to stop in front of a building with a dark red awning. He pulls the door open with his free hand, and leads the both of them inside.

Dream zones out as the woman at the register and George speak, until George gently nudges him and asks, “Do you want to eat at home?”

“I don’t mind either,” Dream responds, even if he thinks he might fall asleep on the spot.

George gives him a knowing look, before telling the woman, “To go, please.”

They wait patiently for their order, and when a plastic bag full of food is pushed towards them, Dream offers to carry it home, but is immediately shut down with a glance. He holds the door open for George on the way out, as compensation.

The walk back home flies by, with the sound of the bag gently hitting George’s shin with each step, and he lets go of Dream’s hand briefly when he unlocks the door to their apartment.

Dream spares no time to shove off his shoes and head to the sofa, collapsing onto the cushion as George huffs a slight laugh. He sets the food on the coffee table, and takes off his sweatshirt, a simple white t-shirt underneath.

“Wake up,” he tells Dream, pulling out a Styrofoam box. “Do you need me to spoon-feed you?”

“I’m awake,” Dream groans, barely conscious as he leans forward for a plastic fork.

George had ordered for the both of them, and had, thankfully, gotten Dream something he knew

he'd like. They both eat while George pulls up an episode of *Game of Thrones*. It's nice. It feels like home.

An indistinguishable feeling floods his chest and ribcage and lungs when Dream leans into George as they eat, and they melt into one where their shoulders and knees and thighs and hips meet, enough so that Dream wonders if they're both made of clay, scrounged up from the earth and slowly molding into each other.

He shoves a forkful of noodles into his mouth. Or maybe he's just delirious.

They haven't said much all day, but Dream doesn't mind, there's not much to say when they know each other, holding hands and holding hearts. Dream turns to look at George.

He's got a swipe of sauce in the corner of his mouth, barely noticeable as he chews. He's a horrid chewer, and Dream would take the chance to complain, but he's tired and warm and comfortable.

There's sauce in the corner of George's mouth, and Dream thinks, *I love you*.

It's not as shocking as he would assume.

October 24

4:44 A.M.

It's the middle of the night, as it usually is, and Dream is currently cramming in as many words as he can into his paper's word count, barely awake as he types away a half-hearted thesis. He wouldn't be able to explain his own paper at gunpoint. That was a problem for future-Dream to worry about.

The moon is gone, hidden behind hazy clouds that hide behind the drawn-in curtains of the kitchen, where Dream sits at the dining table. The darkness of the night, unrestrained by the absence of light, does nothing to fight away the oncoming headache from his laptop's blue light, a consequence from downing two Red Bulls and staring at documents all day.

Dream could be considered barely conscious as he types away, fingers clumsily poking away at his keyboard and head slowly nodding forward when the front door swings open, keys jingling as an alarm.

Half of him panics for a moment, forgetting who he is and where he is when he considers the idea of him possibly being robbed at three a.m. This thought, of course, is immediately discarded when George turns the corner and steps into the kitchen, eyes bright and wide awake.

"You're up late," he notes, placing a grocery bag across from Dream, plastic crinkling from inside. He tilts to the side to reach the light switch, before immediately turning it off at Dream's visible wince.

"I have a paper," Dream responds, watching as George walks over to the counter. He fishes out two mugs, a spoon, and a small pot. "Where were you?"

"I wanted snacks," George offers as an explanation, and any sort of conversation drops when he briefly leaves the kitchen.

Dream blinks at where George had stood, before turning back to his laptop. The words look a little fuzzy, and he squints until they clear up. He begins typing again.

It barely registers as George returns back into the kitchen, puttering around behind Dream's back as he makes up a concoction. George momentarily takes a moment to peer over Dream's shoulder when he walks near, grabbing the plastic bag, and wanders away, immediately disinterested by the amount of long words on the screen.

Dream attempts to spell *seperate* (separate? separete?) for the eighth time when a mug is placed next to him, steam coiling upward into the air as he looks over.

Despite the obvious scent of chocolate, Dream asks anyway, "What's this?"

"Hot chocolate." George slides into the seat next to him, his own mug in his hands, and he makes a face when he takes a sip. "Tongue hurts," he says, but it comes out as *tonk hurths*.

"You're an idiot," Dream sighs, bumping his socked foot against George's. "Wait for it to cool down."

"Alright, *mum*," George rolls his eyes, yelping when Dream makes to flick at him.

It feels a little strange, drinking hot chocolate in the darkness of the kitchen, as though it's a secret, but it wakes Dream up fairly better, sending a tidal wave of warmth in his stomach as he drinks it in. The words on the screen clear up a bit, and he makes the effort of sitting up straight as he goes back to his work.

George stays sitting next to him, quietly scrolling through his phone. He doesn't offer much besides constant company, sometimes adjusting and causing the chair to squeak, or playing a TikTok on low volume while he stifles a laugh, trying his best not to be distracting.

It doesn't work, but he isn't to be put at blame when George would be distracting no matter what he is doing. George is strange that way, with his ability to gain attention without doing much at all, even when he's scrolling through Twitter and paying no mind to the man beside him. It's an unnatural talent.

Or maybe, Dream thinks as he finds himself staring again, it's just his own fault.

An hour passes until it's four a.m., and Dream's bones creak as he stretches, groaning at the weird tingle in his spine. His shoulders pop, and he sighs as he slouches back into the chair. George shifts in the chair beside him, and turns to take a look at him.

"Are you finished?" He asks, leaning a little closer to take a look at Dream's screen. Dream forces himself to breathe.

"Not yet," Dream mumbles, mindlessly checking his page count. "I've got a few more pages, and then I can go to bed."

"Oh." George frowns, and Dream can't help the strange urge to press it away. "Do you want me to stay while you finish?"

Dream shakes his head. "You can go to bed, George, I don't mind."

"No, it's alright, I can stay up," he reassures, and it'd be more effective, if not for the yawn that cuts in between his words. They both look at each other, George's eyes a little teary from the yawn.

"Go to sleep, George," he says softly, and George huffs as he gets up from his chair. He lingers anyway, out of his chair, but stays standing next to Dream as he overlooks his typing. It's a silent

few moments, until Dream lets his head fall back, and he groans loudly. Maybe a little too loudly for four a.m.

He can feel a cool hand place itself in his hair, gentle when George rakes his fingers through Dream's hair. He sighs at the sensation, and tilts his body close to where George stands beside him, until he wraps a hand around his hip and presses him close.

George is warm where Dream shoves his face against the side of his stomach, the smell of their laundry detergent filling his head as he lets out a sound of despair into George's sweatshirt. He can feel it when George laughs at the feeling, slightly ticklish.

"I'm dropping out," Dream announces into George's side, somewhat hazy from the feeling of George running a hand through his hair in slow, steady strokes. He might fall asleep, if he's not careful.

George scoffs, the pull of the movement tangible. "Come on, you're nearly done."

Dream's grip on his hip tightens, if only barely, and he breathes out deeply. "I hate this."

"You're nearly done," he reminds him, hand steady in its place in Dream's hair. "You're practically finished, just a page or two to go."

Dream sighs, and holds onto George a little longer, before letting go. He wishes George didn't have to go. "I guess. You should go to bed."

"I'm too awake to sleep," he shrugs, and sits back down onto the chair. His chair is closer than before, close enough that George leans over and their shoulders bump. "I'll keep you company."

"You were yawning a minute ago," Dream points out, and is punched on the thigh.

"Well, I'm not anymore," George replies petulantly. "Get back to your paper, dumbass."

Despite the biting words, George's voice is warm, and Dream smiles.

Neither of them budge until Dream's paper is done and over with.

November 6

5:07 P.M.

Autumn is in full swing, the wet, decaying bits of leaves sticking to the bottom of Dream's shoes when he comes home.

He takes off his shoes at the door, steps of rainwater on the *Welcome!* doormat as he attempts to not get his socks wet as well. It's golden hour in the kitchen when Dream washes his hands and gets himself a glass of water, hands a little numb from the autumn chill. He almost drops the glass when placing it back down, causing a loud clatter where it less than gently hits the counter.

He's in the living room when George appears, summoned by the sound of his clumsiness, undoubtedly, slowly peering into the room while he holds a hoodie. It's the same pink hoodie he had stolen from Dream so many nights ago, one that Dream had never bothered to ask for. He could always buy another hoodie, anyhow.

"You look stupid," George says as a greeting, motioning to Dream's hair, which has turned on the

side of ridiculous, poking every way with the commotion of rain and wind outside.

Dream sighs, looking down at his clothing. He should've brought along an umbrella. "I'm all wet. And *cold*." He shivers, and tries to pull the damp sweater away from his body. "I need to change."

George shuffles towards him, offering the hoodie in his hand. "You can wear this. I was about to give it back to you, so. Good timing."

Dream shakes his head, no matter how cold he is. "It's fine, you can— you can keep it. I don't mind." At George's raised eyebrow, he tacks on, "I want you to keep it." His lungs feel full of cotton. Dream should start thinking before he speaks.

George slowly retracts his arm. "Okay." He doesn't stop staring at Dream. "You have a bunch of leaves in your hair. I feel like I should mention it."

Dream's hand immediately raises to his hair, pulling at the strands while fishing for leaves. His hair is wet under his palm, soggy and curling, and, after a few seconds of useless searching, not a single leaf has been acquired.

George cracks a smile. "You look like an idiot."

"Help me," Dream whines, and George grants him mercy by stepping closer and motioning to him.

"Lean down," he says, huffing at their height difference. He glares when Dream gives him a grin. "Shut up."

"I didn't say anything!" Dream insists, giggling when George swats at his arm. Even so, he does as he's told and leans down, ducking his head forward.

George is close as he picks out the leaves from his hair, careful not to pull on any strands while collecting three, deep red leaves from his hair, smaller than his pinky. Dream stares at him while he does so, a view of the underside of his jaw, his neck, and Dream so desperately wants to reach out.

"Did you run into a tree or something," George mutters after pulling out a sixth leaf from his hair and placing it in his palm. He steps back, only a few inches away from Dream's face.

"Obviously not," Dream scoffs, shaking his head, and a few strands fall into his eyes. George doesn't hesitate to lean forward and fix his hair for him, gentle fingers that brush the strands away from Dream's face. George's eyebrows are furrowed as he focuses, a small frown on his lips, and Dream has the urge to lean forward.

George's touch is warm where it barely makes contact with Dream's forehead, until his hand begins to fall away, and Dream, on some sort of instinct, grabs his wrist. George freezes, and Dream watches his gaze move from his face to where Dream holds him, fingers wrapped around his wrist, and neither of them move away.

George uncurls his hand, open and inviting, and Dream takes it as a chance to bring his palm forward, before he places a small kiss into George's palm.

There's a small seed of anxiousness in Dream's stomach, and he doesn't know where he had gotten the sudden bravery to do such a thing. It was so strangely intimate, the decision to kiss the palm of George's hand, the unwavering eye contact when he had done so, and it's only a thing lovers do. He doesn't know what to do with himself.

It's almost funny, how immediately George's cheeks turn pink, a blush spreading from his cheeks

to his necks to his ears, and he blinks a few times, expression unmoving. His fingers twitch.

He lets go of George's wrist.

George doesn't move, hand hovering in the air.

Neither of them have said anything, until Dream, nervousness overtaking him, tries to apologize, "I don't—"

"You still look stupid," George notes, before dragging Dream into a kiss.

It's a Thursday evening when George kisses him. He kisses Dream like it's all he's thought about, pressing against his mouth and pressing him closer and stepping closer and Dream can't do much besides shakily press back, not quite sure what to do with himself.

George has got a proper grip on the collar of Dream's sweater, grip going a little loose to instead move to the side of Dream's jaw, where he cups it lightly, where his palm is warm and cuts through the cold, driving Dream warm like he usually does.

It's not like how he's dreamed it to be— there is the scratch of stubble with every other movement, and they're both trying to press into each other, overeager and overexcited, more clumsy than anything else, and it's in the *living room* of all places, but Dream couldn't think of anything better. Dream couldn't think at all, if he tried, with George's mouth on his.

Despite shivering a few moments ago, Dream feels warmth flowering from his chest, from his lungs to his stomach to the tips of his fingers. He is barely conscious of his own hand raising to hold George's side, gently pressing through the cloth and to his skin, so light in touch, as if George was fragile.

George leans back, inhaling a deep breath, and it's barely past his lips when Dream leans in again.

Maybe he's a little too eager when he kisses George again, with enough unintentional force that George is tipped back, a steady arm wrapped around his middle to keep him from falling, but it doesn't seem to do much for the table next to them, which holds a vase of flowers that they both step into.

The vase spins around itself once on impact, before tilting to the side and heading straight for the floor. Dream is barely in time when he reaches out, the flower vase clumsily falling into his outstretched hand, and they both sigh in relief when only a splash of water drips out of the vase, and a few flowers slip out.

Dream carefully places the vase back onto the table, before turning to look back at George.

George raises an eyebrow. "Eager."

Dream flushes. "Shut up."

"I wasn't complaining," George grins, cheeks scrunching upward, and Dream can't resist when he raises his hands, pressing his palms against the sides of George's face. George turns pinker under his palms, growing warm, a big bang of sorts, and Dream is pushed into another whirlwind.

"I'm kind of in love with you," Dream blurts out like the sap he is, trying to get his own dignity under wraps when he admits just so. He doesn't know why it comes out so easily, but he supposed it's to be expected when it's constantly running through his head like it is.

George slowly blinks, pressing his lips together and unsuccessfully suppressing a smile. “Just kind of?”

“I am so tired of you,” Dream responds, but giggles when George steps back, pulling Dream back as he does so, and he leans forward, half of his body nearly toppling over George.

“I am so tired of *you*,” George huffs when they both almost fall over by the sheer weight of Dream, and it’s a miracle they don’t. In the process, however, the flower vase succeeds in falling over, water and flowers spilling into their rug, drawing it wet.

They both turn to look at the fallen vase, before George decides, “That was your fault.”

“It was *not*,” Dream protests, and George leans over to flick at him. Dream ducks and gets a hold of his wrist. George doesn’t resist when he pulls him close, biting down a smile and raising an eyebrow.

Dream presses a thumb against the corner of George’s mouth, which tilts upward at the motion. Despite the fallen flowers and their wet rug, George smiles. Dream resists kissing him again.

It’s happy.

George tugs him a little closer.

It’s home.

End Notes

hello !!! i hope u enjoyed this thing i wrote in like . three days i was speed-running this to get it out in time so it might be a little bit of a Mess
i really hope u enjoy this ari !!!!! i tried to take the answer u gave me when i asked u what sort of fic u wanted weeks ago and make it into something nice to read :] i hope it worked as always, feel free to comment, kudos, and u can see me [here](#) or [here!](#)
thank u so much for reading !

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!